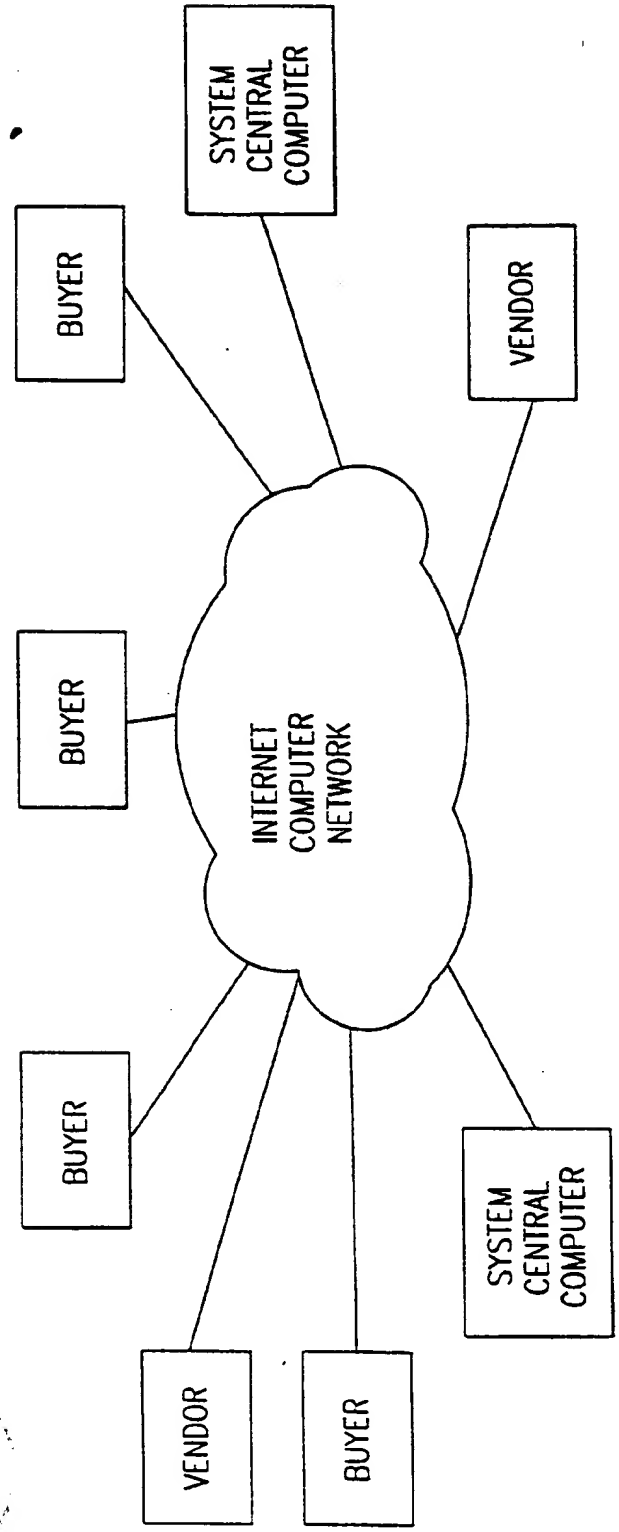
SYSTEM CENTRAL COMPUTER
BUYER
VENDOR
BUYER
INTERNET COMPUTER NETWORK
BUYER
SYSTEM CENTRAL COMPUTER
VENDOR
BUYER

FIG. 1

THE PRICE QUOTATION SYSTEM PROVIDES AN INTERNET HOME PAGE FOR USERS WHO HAVE:

1. SOFTWARE TO ACCESS THE INTERNET (WORLD WIDE WEB)
2. ACCESS TO THE INTERNET VIA A LOCAL ACCESS PROVIDER

THE USER CONNECTS TO THE INTERNET AND ACCESSES THE QUOTATION SYSTEM INTERNET ADDRESS. ONCE ACCESSED, THE SYSTEM PROVIDES A LIST OF OPTIONS, ONE OF WHICH IS "DO YOU WANT TO REQUEST A PRICE QUOTATION?. THE BUYER SELECTS THIS OPTION.

THE BUYER NEXT SELECTS A PRODUCT TYPE, e.g.
COMPUTER PRODUCTS
APPLIANCES
ELECTRONIC PARTS AND COMPONENTS
ET CETERA

THE BUYER REQUESTS A QUOTATION FOR EITHER:
A CATAGORY OF ITEMS (e.g. PERSONAL COMPUTER MONITORS); OR
A SPECIFIC ITEM (e.g. SEGATE MODEL 225 HARD DISK DRIVE)

ONCE SELECTED, THE BUYER SUBMITS THE REQUEST BY SELECTING AN OPTION ON THE INTERNET SITE REQUEST FORM.

THE QUOTATION SYSTEM PROCESSES THE REQUEST BY SELECTING A CLASS OF VENDORS WHO SELL THE REQUESTED PRODUCT(S) AND MEET THE FILTER REQUIREMENTS OF THE BUYER, VENDOR, AND THE QUOTATION SYSTEM. THE QUOTATION SYSTEM THEN MAKES AVAILABLE THE REQUEST(S) TO EACH SELECTED VENDOR VIA FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOL (FTP) OR E-MAIL.

EACH SELECTED VENDOR RESPONDS TO THE REQUEST(S) BY PROVIDING ITS PRICING AND OTHER INFORMATION TO THE QUOTATION SYSTEM. THIS IS DONE AUTOMATICALLY USING SOFTWARE PROVIDED BY THE QUOTATION SYSTEM TO EACH VENDOR. VENDOR SOFTWARE CONNECTS WITH THE QUOTATION SYSTEM ON A VENDOR DETERMINED SCHEDULE FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING REQUESTS FOR QUOTATION AND RESPONDING THERETO WITH INVENTORY AND PRICING INFORMATION EACH VENDOR KEEPS CURRENT USING THE QUOTATION SYSTEM PROVIDED SOFTWARE.

FIG. 2A

THE QUOTATION SYSTEM USES THE VENDOR'S QUOTATIONS TO PREPARE E-MAIL FOR THE REQUESTING BUYER. THE E-MAIL CAN BE FORMATTED USING HTML CODES TO PERMIT THE BUYER TO DISPLAY ITS E-MAIL AS IF IT WERE AN HTML PAGE. IN THIS WAY THE E-MAIL RESPONSE WILL HAVE HTML HYPERTEXT CAPABILITY AND ENABLE THE BUYER TO SELECT OPTIONS FROM THE HTML CODED E-MAIL FOR CONVENIENT PROCESSING OF THE QUOTATIONS. SUCH OPTIONS MAY INCLUDE SENDING AN ELECTRONIC PURCHASE ORDER IN RESPONSE TO A VENDORS QUOTATION AND REQUESTING THAT APPROPRIATE CREDIT INFORMATION OF THE BUYER BE PROVIDED TO THE VENDOR FROM RECORDS KEPT BY THE QUOTATION SYSTEM. APPLICATION HELPER SOFTWARE CAN BE PROVIDED BY THE QUOTATION SYSTEM TO SYSTEM MEMBERS FOR CONVENIENT PROCESSING OF HTML E-MAIL RESPONSES.

FIG. 2B

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A VENDOR MAY POST SPECIAL SALE ITEMS TO THE QUOTATION SYSTEM VIA THE INTERNET OR OTHERWISE. IN TURN THE SYSTEM WILL FORWARD THE SPECIAL SALE OFFERS TO ANY USER WHO REGISTERS OR HAS REGISTERED THEIR INTEREST IN RECEIVING SALE OFFERS FOR THE PRODUCT OR CATEGORY BEING OFFERED BY THE VENDOR, PROVIDED THE USER MEETS THE VENDOR'S AND THE QUOTATION SYSTEM'S FILTER REQUIREMENTS.

FOR EXAMPLE, COMPUTER CITY COMMUNICATES TO THE QUOTATION SYSTEM A SPECIAL SALE ON IBM TYPE PERSONAL COMPUTER MONITORS.

IF A SYSTEM MEMBER PRE-REGISTERED ITS INTEREST IN RECEIVING OFFERS FOR PERSONAL COMPUTER MONITORS (e.g. VIA THE QUOTATION SYSTEM'S INTERNET SITE), THE SYSTEM WILL E-MAIL THE COMPUTER CITY SALE INFORMATION TO THE SYSTEM MEMBER'S E-MAIL ADDRESS PROVIDED THE MEMBER IS LOCATED IN A VENDOR SPECIFIED AREA.

FIG. 3

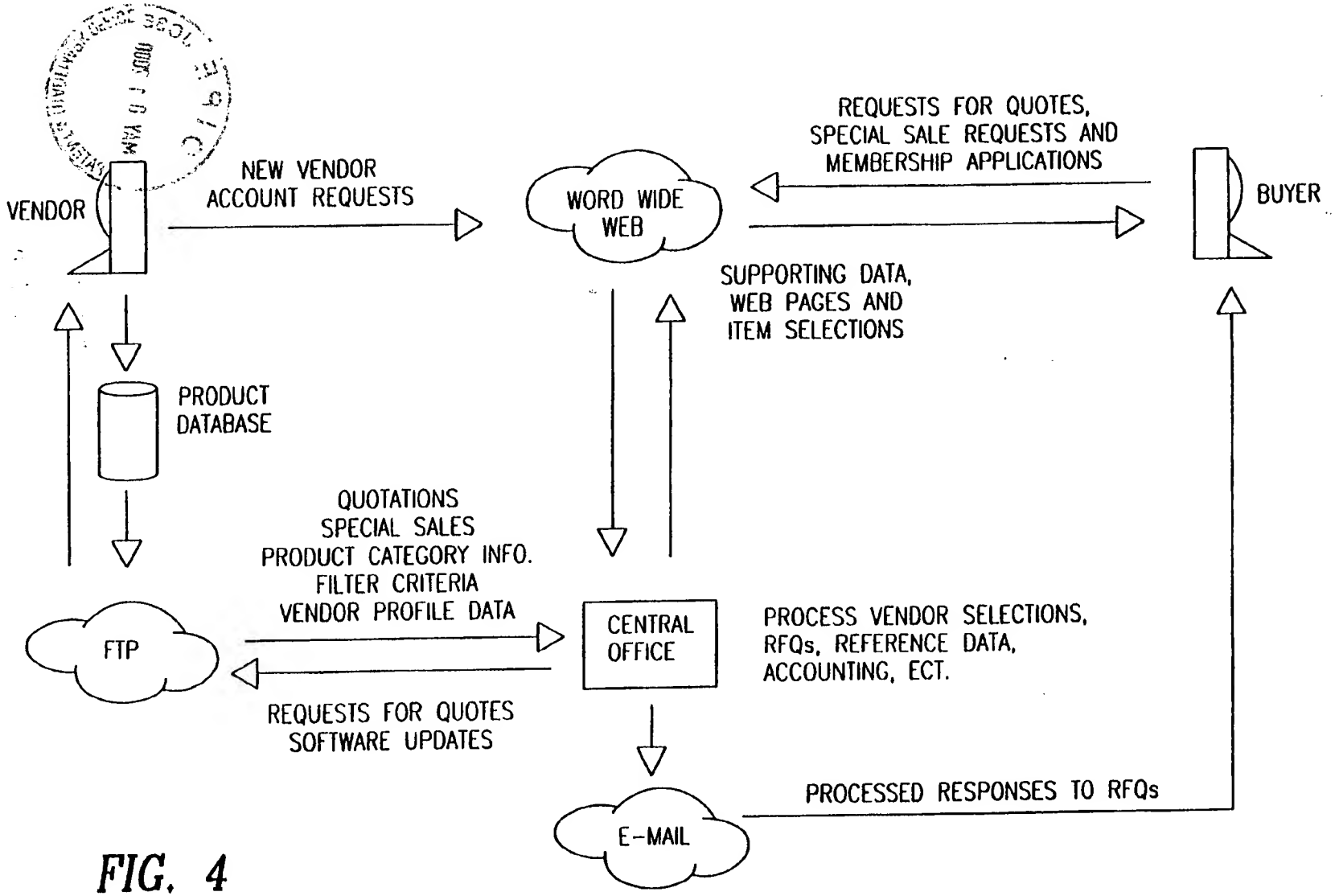
VENDOR
NEW VENDOR ACCOUNT REQUESTS
WORD WIDE WEB
REQUESTS FOR QUOTES, SPECIAL SALE REQUESTS AND MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS
BUYER
SUPPORTING DATA, WEB PAGES AND ITEM SELECTIONS
PRODUCT DATABASE
QUOTATIONS SPECIAL SALES PRODUCT CATEGORY INFO. FILTER CRITERIA VENDOR PROFILE DATA
FTP
CENTRAL OFFICE
PROCESS VENDOR SELECTIONS, RFQs, REFERENCE DATA, ACCOUNTING, ECT.
REQUESTS FOR QUOTES SOFTWARE UPDATES
E-MAIL
PROCESSED RESPONSES TO RFQs

FIG. 4

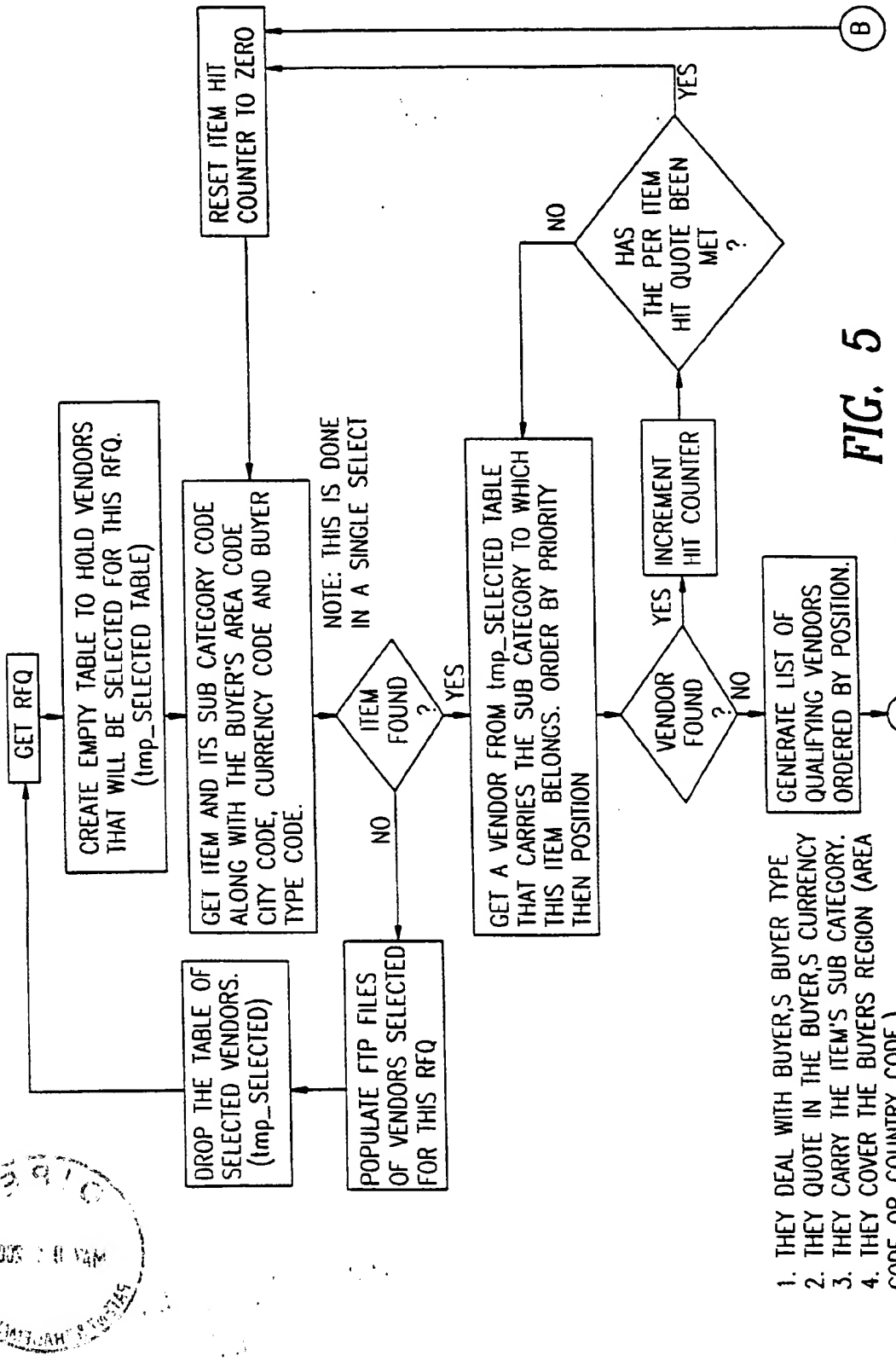
GET RFQ
CREATE EMPTY TABLE TO HOLD VENDORS THAT WILL BE SELECTED FOR THIS RFQ. (tmp_SELECTED TABLE)
GET ITEM AND ITS SUB CATEGORY CODE ALONG WITH THE BUYER'S AREA CODE CITY CODE, CURRENCY CODE AND BUYER TYPE CODE.
NOTE: THIS IS DONE IN A SINGLE SELECT
ITEM FOUND ?
YES
NO
POPULATE FTP FILES OF VENDORS SELECTED FOR THIS RFQ
DROP THE TABLE OF SELECTED VENDORS. (tmp_SELECTED)
GET A VENDOR FROM tmp_SELECTED TABLE THAT CARRIES THE SUB CATEGORY TO WHICH THIS ITEM BELONGS. ORDER BY PRIORITY THEN POSITION
VENDOR FOUND ?
YES
NO
INCREMENT HIT COUNTER
HAS THE PER ITEM HIT QUOTE BEEN MET ?
NO
YES
GENERATE LIST OF QUALIFYING VENDORS ORDERED BY POSITION.
RESET ITEM HIT COUNTER TO ZERO
A
B
1. THEY DEAL WITH BUYER,S BUYER TYPE
2. THEY QUOTE IN THE BUYER,S CURRENCY
3. THEY CARRY THE ITEM'S SUB CATEGORY.
4. THEY COVER THE BUYERS REGION (AREA CODE OR COUNTRY CODE.)

FIG. 5

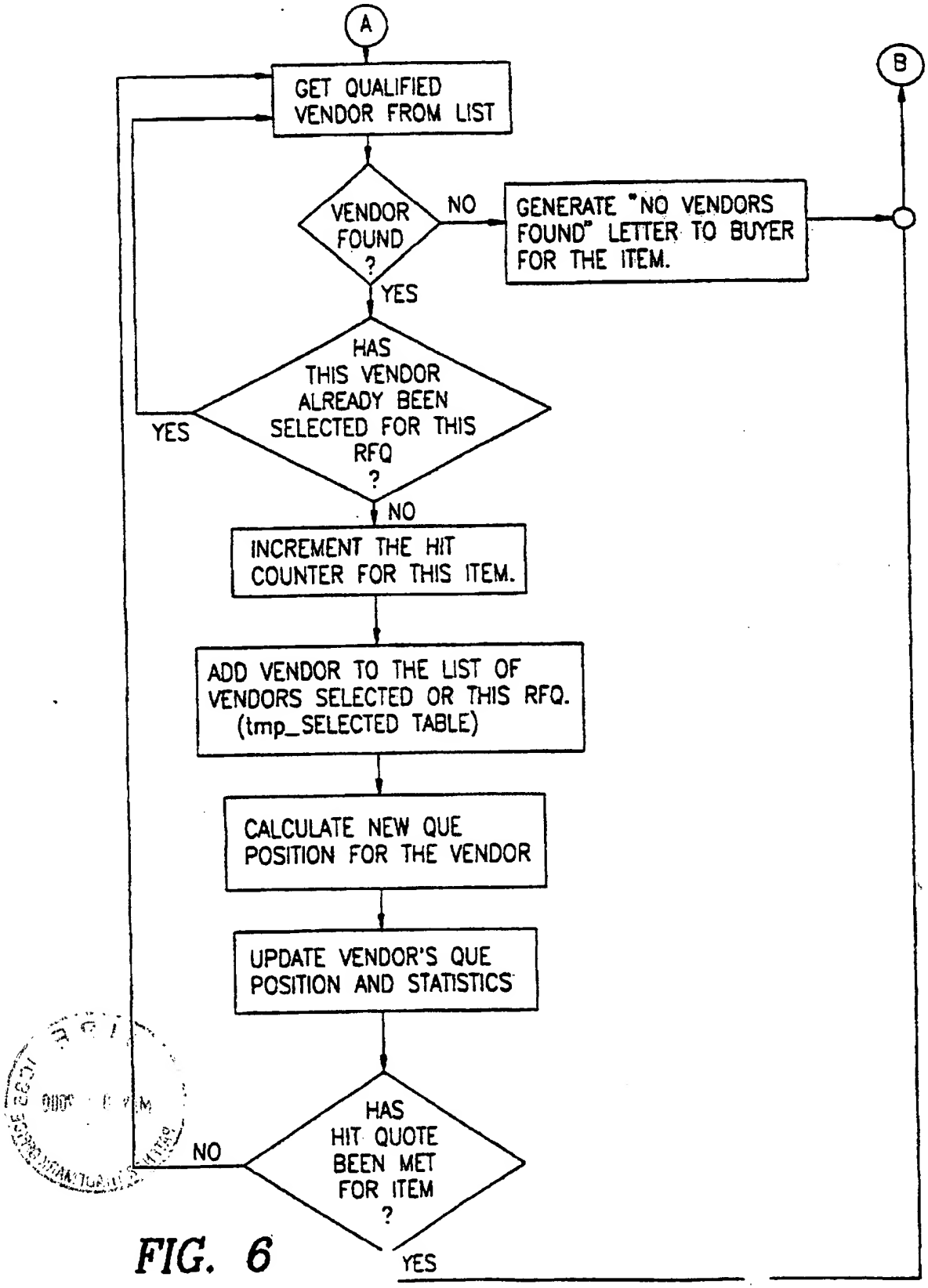
A
B
GET QUALIFIED VENDOR FROM LIST
VENDOR FOUND ?
NO
GENERATE "NO VENDORS FOUND" LETTER TO BUYER FOR THE ITEM.
YES
HAS THIS VENDOR ALREADY BEEN SELECTED FOR THIS RFQ ?
YES
NO
INCREMENT THE HIT COUNTER FOR THIS ITEM.
ADD VENDOR TO THE LIST OF VENDORS SELECTED OR THIS RFQ. (tmp_SELECTED TABLE)
CALCULATE NEW QUE POSITION FOR THE VENDOR
UPDATE VENDOR'S QUE POSITION AND STATISTICS
HAS HIT QUOTE BEEN MET FOR ITEM ?
NO
YES

FIG. 6

SAMPLE BUYER'S DATA PACKET

- BUYER'S IDENTIFICATION (CODE)
- TRACKING NUMBER
- DATE AND TIME
- PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION
- QUANTITY
- SHIP METHOD
- SHIP DESTINATION
- VENDOR QUALIFICATIONS (FILTER CONDITIONS)
- BUYER'S NOTES

NOTE: BUYER'S FILTER CONDITIONS MIGHT INCLUDE LANGUAGE SPOKEN, CURRENCY OF QUOTATION, TYPE OF VENDOR (e.g. MANUFACTURER, DISTRIBUTOR, RETAILER, ECT.), OR LOCATION OF THE VENDOR.

VENDOR ADDS TO THE DATA PACKET

- VENDORS IDENTIFICATION (CODE)
- QUOTATION NUMBER
- QUOTATION DATE
- QUOTATION EXPIRATION
- PRICE PER UNIT
- TOTAL PRICE
- TAXES
- SHIPPING CHARGE
- DELIVERY TIME
- VENDOR'S NOTES

NOTE: VENDOR'S FILTER QUALIFICATIONS FOR BUYERS CAN BE REGISTERED WITH THE QUOTATION SYSTEM CENTRAL OFFICE IN ADVANCE ENABLING THE CENTRAL OFFICE TO FILTER BUYER'S RFQS AND PROVIDE VENDORS WITH FILTER QUALIFIED BUYERS.

FIG. 7

00T050 6HSE0260

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE
MAR 0 1 1999

PRICE QUOTATION

REQ DATE: 07/02/1993
PROD. TYPE NO. : 12432
PROD. CATEGORY : RESISTORS
PRODUCT NAME : TYPE J RESISTOR 5%
PRODUCT NUMBER : OH006-2000656
MANUFACTURER : OHMITE
QUANTITY : 5,000 PIECES
NOTES : DELIVERY DATE IS FIRM.

TRACKING NO : 1016
ROUTING TO : NEW JERSEY
PROD. CODE : 4800

DELIVERY DATE : 08/01/1993

QUOTE DATE : 07/03/1993 VENDOR NO. : 456546
VENDOR NAME : ACME RESISTIOR SUPPLY, INC.
CONTACT : JOHN MURRAY
VENDOR PHONE : 515 222-3333
VENDOR FAX : 515 222-3056
CAN SHIP BY : 07/03/1993

UNIT PRICE :		0.28
5,000 PIECE	=	1,400.00
SALES TAX :		0.00
UPS GROUND :		26.00
=		========
		1,426.00

VENDOR NOTES : SHIPPED 1000 PER BOX FROM INVENTORY, SUBJECT TO PRIOR SALE.

ACCEPT/REJECT QUOTE :

FIG. 8